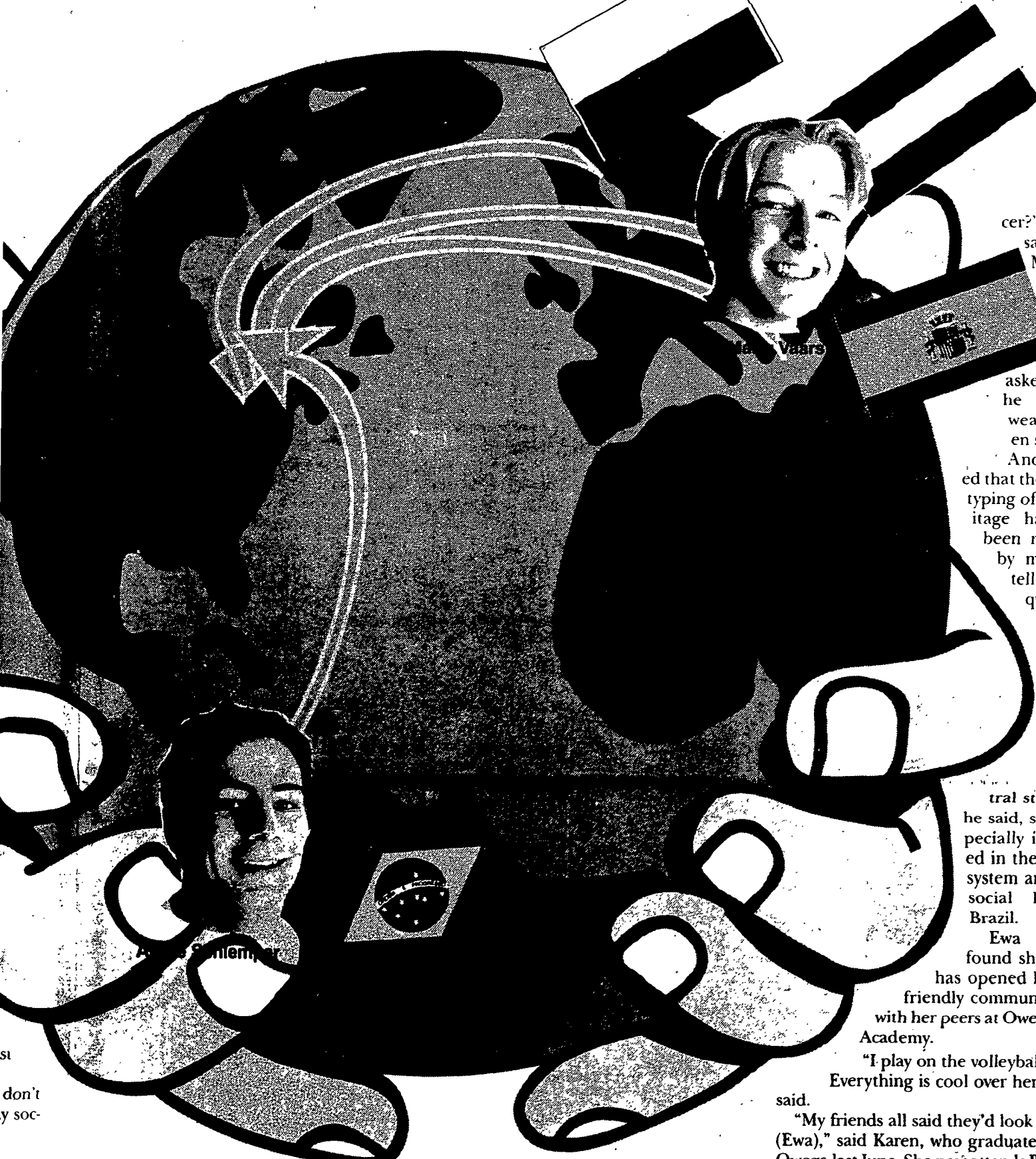


# ON HOMIE



cer?" Andre said.

Meanwhile, Marty said he's been asked why he doesn't wear wooden shoes.

Andre noted that the stereotyping of his heritage has now been replaced by more intelligent questions regarding Brazil and its people. Sodus Central students,

he said, seem especially interested in the school system and teen social life in Brazil.

Ewa has found she, also, has opened lines of friendly communication with her peers at Owego Free Academy.

"I play on the volleyball team. Everything is cool over here," Eva said.

"My friends all said they'd look out for (Ewa)," said Karen, who graduated from Owego last June. She now attends Broome Community College in Binghamton.

Eva and Carlos said they both enjoy attending Sunday Mass with their host families. However, Carlos — who lists sleeping as one of his favorite leisure activities — has one complaint.

"The Mass here is at 9 o'clock and in Spain it's at 12," he said.

Back in Sodus, Father Faraone noted, his exchange students (who are Catholic, as are the others who were interviewed) are active members of Epiphany's youth group, participating in lock-ins and service projects. Andre will receive the sacrament of confirmation in May, one month before he and Marty return to their respective homelands.

Marty and Andre were linked with Father Faraone through the American Institute of Foreign Study placement agency. The pastor said he has greatly enjoyed his role as host.

"I think there were some parenting needs in me that could be challenged, could be accessed," Father Faraone said.

Marty and Andre are among six foreign exchange students attending Sodus Central this year. Father Faraone said he originally got involved because a Hungarian student was in need of a host family and may not have been able to come to Sodus unless he had stepped in. Ironically, the

Hungarian student backed out, and Father Faraone ended up with both Marty and Andre instead.

"Not having other teenagers in the house, I thought it was a healthier setting to have two students," Father Faraone explained. "They could walk to school together and feel comfortable that they had someone their own age to spend time with."

Father Faraone pointed out that exchange students are normally placed in families with at least two children, and that Marty and Andre had the option of not living with him because he was a single person.

"I wrote an extremely good profile," Father Faraone laughed.

Marty and Andre pointed out that the trio has struck a remarkably close friendship, considering that none of them had met until last August.

"We're really lucky with each other," Marty said.

"It looked like it was planned before we came," Andre agreed.

Similarly close bonds exist between Megan Fetting and Carlos, whom she said she now treats like a brother.

"It's been kind of nice to have somebody else to hang out with and talk to — and pick on," Megan, 17, said.

Megan added that families should consider the benefits of hosting foreign exchange students.

"It gives you a new cultural awareness," she said. "I think everybody should be able to experience that."

All of the foreign exchange teens interviewed — as well as their hosts — anticipate emotional farewells when June rolls around.

"No, don't say that!" Megan exclaimed, clapping her hands over her ears, when asked about parting with Carlos. However, she noted that her graduation gift will be a two-week trip to Madrid this summer to visit Carlos.

Marty and Andre agreed that their goodbyes will be difficult when it comes time to return to their native lands.

"I didn't cry when I stepped on the plane (leaving Holland)," Marty said. "Now I think I'm going to cry at the airport when I go home."

"I was sure I was going to come back (to Brazil) in 10 months. But here, you know you're not going to come back anymore," Andre said. "I've had a good relationship with Father Dave and Marty, and when you know you're not coming back, it's that much harder."

In the meantime, the two teens will keep the mood light in their continual attempt to make Father Faraone crack up during Sunday Mass.

"I won't let them sit in the front row," the pastor joked.

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